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TOWN OF ARLINGTON
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Laura Swan, Chair
Transportation Advisory Committee

FROM: Ashley Maher
Office Manager

DATE: June 16, 2022

RE: Crosswalk on Summer Street at Victoria Road

The Select Board at the meeting of June 13th referred the attached to you for your review and recommendations back to the Board.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

attachment

cc: Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

From: Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner

CC: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development

Date: June 1, 2022

RE: Correspondence Regarding Crosswalk on Summer Street at Victoria Road

On March 30, 2021, the Select Board forwarded correspondence to the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) from resident Chris Shores regarding the safety of the Summer Street crosswalk at the intersection of Summer Street at Victoria Road. Specifically, Mr. Shores was concerned about drivers going too fast on Summer Street, not yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk, and sight distance problems from parked vehicles on Summer Street. He noted that this challenge is especially acute for families with children and a visually impaired resident who frequently crosses here. This memo detailing the situation and recommendations for next steps is a follow-up to that correspondence.

Location Context, Resident Communication, Staff Observations and Crash Data

Summer Street (Route 2A) crosses Arlington west to east from the Lexington Town Line to where it terminates at the intersection of Mystic Street/Summer Street/Mystic Valley Parkway. Between Mill Street and Mystic Street/Mystic Valley Parkway, Summer Street provides access to Buzzell Field Park and Arlington Catholic Field on the south, and the Morningside neighborhood to the north. At Victoria Road, which is one-way going north to Mystic Street, a crosswalk is across Summer Street to provide pedestrian access to Buzzell Field and Arlington Catholic Field and is the only crosswalk along this segment between Mill Street and Mystic Street/Mystic Valley Parkway. There is no traffic control and car traffic generally operates in a free-flow manner on Summer Street, except when eastbound drivers must stop and wait for oncoming traffic before turning left to go north on Victoria Road. There are no bus routes on this segment of Summer Street.

Town staff reached out to Mr. Shores in April 2021 and met with him at the location to discuss his correspondence and make observations. Further observations were conducted later and at different times of the day to understand the issue.

The crosswalk on Summer Street at Victoria Road is located on the east (Mystic Street) side of the intersection, making it offset from the entrance to Buzzell Field. Summer Street between Mill Street and Victoria Road includes a horizontal curve in the road that makes it difficult for eastbound drivers to see pedestrians on the Buzzell Field side of the crosswalk, and difficult for pedestrians to be able to see eastbound approaching traffic when waiting at the crosswalk without stepping out into the road. On-street parking, permitted on this segment of Summer Street, exacerbates the sight distance problem significantly for drivers and pedestrians. When paired with the speed of traffic on this segment (speed regulations indicate it should be 25 mph but is unsigned in this corridor) it presents an unsafe environment leading to close calls between drivers and pedestrians – something that was experienced by staff during observations. Another serious safety issue is that, when eastbound drivers are waiting to turn left onto Victoria Road, drivers behind them frequently pass on their right in the narrow shoulder. Staff observed situations where the behavior of passing on the right put pedestrians in jeopardy, especially when pedestrians would try to cross and passing drivers would not see them because their view was blocked by the driver waiting to turn left. These issues are of great concern due to the proximity of children in the immediate area and general high usage of the crosswalk to get to the parks, the Minuteman Bikeway, or to cut through Buzzell Field to get to Arlington Center. Many pedestrians also cross to get to games taking place at Buzzell Field and Arlington Catholic Field when they park in the neighborhood to the north.

In 2019 the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) addressed a complaint from a resident of Columbia Road regarding this crosswalk with a recommendation to restrict parking 40' before the crosswalk (on the eastbound side) and five feet after the crosswalk (on the westbound side, effectively between the crosswalk and a nearby driveway). The Select Board approved TAC's recommendations for the no parking areas at their June 3, 2019 meeting. Although the installation of the no parking signs has improved the situation somewhat, staff observed drivers frequently parking illegally in the no parking area just before the crosswalk on the Buzzell Field side of Summer Street. There are no pavement markings or other infrastructure that prevents drivers from violating the no parking signage. It should be noted that staff have also continued to receive resident complaints about this intersection despite the changes recommended by TAC and implemented by Town staff.

The intersection of Summer Street at Victoria Road has been the site of numerous crashes over the past several years. According to MassDOT data, since 2016 twelve crashes have occurred at this intersection. The majority of these crashes were rear-end crashes (10), with two angle collisions, most occurring in daylight (9), with injuries reported in four of the crashes. One of the injury crashes involved a pedestrian. The number of crashes at this intersection is significant and is higher than the number of crashes at Mill Street and Summer Street in the same period. At least a dozen other crashes on Summer Street between Mill St and Mystic St have been reported between 2016-2021. Table 1 summarizes the crash data for Summer Street at Victoria Road. Note that crashes from 2016-2019 have been closed out, while 2021 crashes are still being reviewed by the RMV and are subject to change.

Crash Date	Type of Collision	Light Conditions	Injury Severity	Nonmotorist crash?
4/30/2016	Rear-end	Daylight	No injury	No
5/21/2016	Rear-end	Daylight	No injury	No
6/30/2016	Rear-end	Daylight	Not Reported	No
10/25/2017	Rear-end	Daylight	Non-fatal injury - Non-incapacitating	No
12/9/2017	Rear-end	Dark - lighted roadway	No Injury	No
6/1/2018	Angle	Daylight	Non-fatal injury - Non-incapacitating	No
11/21/2018	Rear-end	Daylight	No Injury	No
6/17/2019	Rear-end	Daylight	No Apparent Injury (O)	No
12/23/2019	Rear-end	Dark - lighted roadway	No Apparent Injury (O)	No
3/22/2021	Rear-end	Daylight	No Apparent Injury (O)	No
7/7/2021	Rear-end	Dark - lighted roadway	Suspected Minor Injury (B)	No
11/13/2021	Angle	Daylight	Suspected Minor Injury (B)	Yes - Collision with pedestrian

Table 1 - 2016-2021 crashes at Summer St at Victoria Road. Source: MassDOT IMPACT Crash Database.

Recommended Action

The intersection of Summer Street and Victoria Road is included in the review for the Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study, as the path is proposed to follow the south side of Summer Street between Mystic St/Mystic Valley Parkway and Mill Street. A draft intersection concept, which will be refined in the final Feasibility Study, proposes relocating the crosswalk to the west (Mill St) side of Victoria Road, reducing the width of the

roadway cross section to shorten the crossing distance, and potentially adding a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to assist pedestrians crossing this busy roadway. A copy of this draft concept is shown in Figure 1. Staff are seeking additional funding through the MassTrails program to design the Summer Street section of the Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway project, to continue working on the project after the Feasibility Study has concluded at the end of June 2022. The results of this design and future construction will be the long-term permanent intervention to the safety issues at this crosswalk.

In the meantime, it may be beneficial to have TAC review this location again and determine short-term countermeasures to improve visibility at this location or other interventions to increase safety, such as tactical interventions similar to those implemented at Mass Ave/Appleton Street. Staff contacted Mr. Shores to discuss the Mystic River Path to Bikeway project and confirm that referring this to TAC is an acceptable next step, and he has agreed to this course of action. Staff recommend that the Board forward this correspondence and any other correspondence concerning Summer Street/Victoria Road to TAC to review this area again.

I am available for questions as needed.

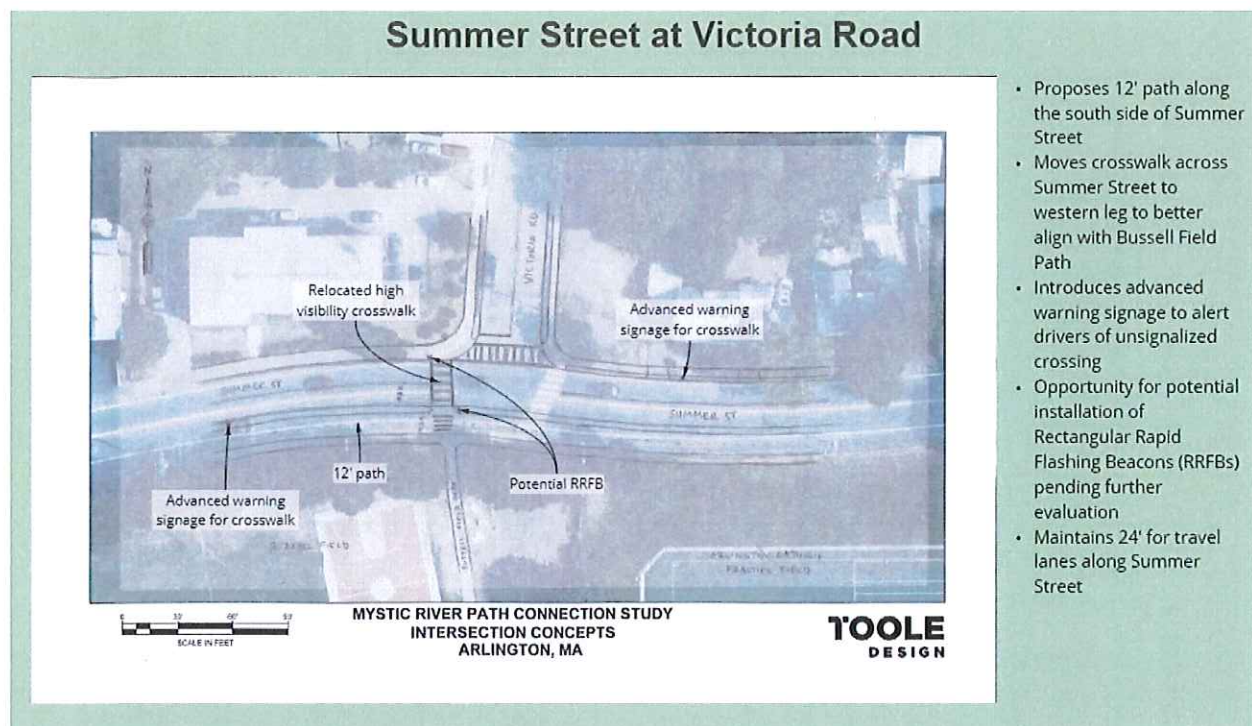


Figure 1 – Summer Street at Victoria Road draft intersection concept developed by Toole Design Group for the Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study.